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UNCLAS VIENNA 003321

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR CA/VO, and EUR/AGS

DHS FOR MNEIFACH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: Austrian Response to DHS letter on VWP

certification based on Personal Identity Card

REF: A) STATE 183690 B) VIENNA 2646

1. Per Reftel A, Post transmitted the text of DHS' certification letter response to the Austrian central VWP contact, Heinrich Pawlicek. Pawlicek, who had meanwhile obtained an electronic copy of the signed original, was eager to point out that the problems in reading the ID card are a result of an intentionally-introduced error used only in sample cards to prevent their misuse. For DHS to test the readability of genuine cards, the Ministry of Interior is now providing a new batch of ID cards for DHS testing. These new cards should be readable by DHS readers. We understand that the cards will be mailed directly to Martin Kraemer, Consul General at the Austrian Embassy in Washington. The text of the Austrian response follows.

2. Begin text:(informal Embassy translation)
During the [September 23] Visa Waiver Program conference in Washington, D.C., representatives of DHS and DOS were presented with a possible solution in the case of Austria, whereby national identity cards might be used to sufficiently compliment Austrian passports issued on or after Oct. 26, 2005. In particular, it was noted that the Austrian personal identity cards are recognized among the most secure documents in the world due to the state-of-the-art technology employed in their design. Also, in the course of the conversation, sample identity cards that met the exact technical standards required by DHS were passed along to U.S. officials. DHS representative, Mr. Brad Wing, offered his individual thanks after the conversation for the suggestion of an outstanding solution.

The Austrian personal identity cards that were handed over to DHS officials are samples - and only samples - of such cards, which is signified on the cards in writing by the word "Specimen." Each card includes an ICAO-compliant, machine-readable zone; the zone is, however, deliberately tagged with an error number to render the cards invalid and thereby prevent their

illegal use. Therefore, when scanned, the sample cards will register as unreadable. This feature is absolutely necessary to prevent misuse since government officials of foreign countries who do not speak German cannot be expected to realize that the name "Musterfrau," printed on the card, translates as "sample woman," and is not in fact someone's actual name. Were a person of passable likeness to acquire the sample card and travel onward to one of the 29 non-German speaking countries where this card is recognized for identity purposes, this security feature ensures he or she will be stopped. This practice is commonplace among manufacturers of sample documents throughout Europe.

The sample cards that were provided should thus have been readable but the DHS readers would likely have recognized the intentionally-introduced error number and have produced an error message.

To address the problem, we will now produce and directly deliver from the Austrian printing office to the US Consulate new sample cards that do not contain this error number. From a security standpoint, these are not "sample" cards, but the "real deal," and as such, we would like to express our concern for their safety and ask that they be kept under lock and key. I would like to kindly request that these comments along with the newly submitted cards be passed along to DHS representative, Mr. Brad Wing, Biometrics Coordinator, US-VISIT, Border and Transportation Security, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and that under his supervision, the new cards be tested.

End text.

VAN VOORST